

GIGANTIC POOL URGED HERE TO SUPPLY EUROPE

American Property Safeguarded in Plan Outlined by J. S. Alexander.

NATIONS SHARE CREDITS

Private Capital Loaned by Public to Buy Goods for Export.

Europe can be rehabilitated and American prosperity safeguarded by a plan to pool Europe's needs of credit and commodities and also to pool America's resources to meet them, the whole to be accomplished by a great credit corporation or private capital free from Government control and political domination.

This is the heart of the rehabilitation and protection plan outlined yesterday by James S. Alexander, president of the National Bank of Commerce and a member of the committee recently formed here, upon the suggestion of Henry P. Davison, to investigate workable methods for supplying Europe with American cash and goods during the grave reconstruction period. The committee is headed by J. P. Morgan.

Mr. Alexander believes he has devised a practical, workable plan which will restore European industry and financial stability while protecting the American public in its loans to Europe. He notes, in the first place, that adequate protection for American investors is an essential factor if continued cooperation with war stricken nations is to be had. Credit and commodities must come from America, which has ample resources to meet the demand, however vast Europe's requirements may be, therefore, as Mr. Alexander views the gigantic problem, the main question is how the job can be most efficiently done.

Semi-Public Basis Thought.

He comprehends that the time for aid by Government compulsion is past and that great as the problem is it must be worked out with private capital strongly organized.

The necessary measure, he holds, should have semi-public basis and should be along lines that will have the support of the Government of the United States but the actual power and authority of whatever plan is adopted must come from widespread public cooperation rather than from Government auspices.

The time is past, said Mr. Alexander, for us to advise the United States Government to finance our Allies in Europe as it did throughout our participation in the war. There are plenty of domestic problems pressing for attention to en-gross the full fiscal policy and activities of the Government, and that time should be given over to the fact that America must respond to the sale of these debentures in a spirit of humanity. Business and humanity are two great social forces which must work together in the present problem.

Security Behind Debentures.

As to the security behind the debentures, they must be based on everything in the way of collateral that Europe is able to offer. The individual European buyer must be prepared to give a general mortgage upon life insurance. His loan should be further protected by a government of his own country, re-enforced where possible by governmental guarantees. Thus every debenture sold to an American investor would have behind it equal security, consisting of the pool of all the collateral supplied by Europe. There would be no risk to the American investor because of my faith in the ability of American business men of many and various interests to work together for a great common and when conditions require it. If there is not this working together, existing unsettled business conditions in Europe will grow worse and will eventually extend to the United States as well.

Therefore from the selfish point of view of American interest, if from no other, this organization in our dealings with Europe is necessary to conserve America's markets and avert possible industrial depression.

After pointing out that the United States has the necessary supplies to meet the needs of Europe, that crops are booming and industry geared up to a degree of productivity never before attained, that the United States is the only nation from which Europe can draw the raw needs, Mr. Alexander proceeded to develop his plan.

There may be mentioned two general methods to be followed in marketing these American goods. One would be the unrestricted, competitive method of normal times where each individual industry and business man had to fight for his market and the strongest won. The other method is that of organization where the total market for the United States, in respect to all nations and all commodities, would be submitted to analysis and allocation for the common good. I feel definitely that this second method would be adopted under certain circumstances for at least a short period of years, until such time as worldwide conditions work themselves back more nearly to normal. This method should be followed to conserve the commercial interests of the nation as a whole.

Credit Risks for Europe.

Urgeing that Europe is to carry on her purchases with us on a credit basis let us consider exactly what this means. The peoples of Europe represent different degrees of credit risks. It would be safer to lend money in some countries than in others. Therefore, if there were not an organized control of American credit, the American companies would be able to extend the weaker countries out of our money markets or else the weaker would be forced to pay exorbitant rates.

They might be able to do this for a time, but they would have to conduct their business with us on such a ruinous basis that in the long run we would doubtless experience financial disaster to them and by that very fact financial loss to American Investors, who would be placed in the position of having loaned their money to bankrupt nations.

From the point of view of American self-interest, therefore, and ignoring all claims of humanity, there is an equally strong credit opportunity as between the strong nations and the weak.

Again, the commodities which Europe must come to America to get are many—food products, industrial metals, textiles, &c. Some are more profitable to produce and sell than others. Some would enjoy a greater demand than others. The stronger commodities would naturally tend, therefore, to crowd our weaker commodities out of the market, although these less profitable commodities might, on the one hand, be essential to the lives of Europe's millions, and on the other, might represent the livelihood and investments of millions of Americans. Under these circumstances a correlation of purchases from this country, we are liable to see serious disappointments in our business structure—that is, great prosperity in some lines, great depressions in others. That would mean in the long run, due to the close interrelation existing among all lines of industry, a depression ultimately of the whole business structure and possibly a collapse, the weaker elements pulling down the stronger.

Finally, unless there is some sort of organized control, American business will be thrown into the position of having to

do business directly and individually with the concerns of Europe. Here again, many countries are much stronger than others. In my mind this would be a grave danger and one from which the American public should be protected by the organized investment judgment of the country.

This mere statement of the various aspects of the situation is indicative of the complexity of the problem. The world might be drawn, and demonstrates that this transitional period from the chaos of war to the orderly processes of peace must be handled in a broad-minded, cooperative way. We owe it to our own people to interpose between them and Europe a number of instruments which would obviate, as far as possible, the foregoing dangers.

Pool Plan Is Suggested.

To serve these purposes a pool of Europe's needs should be met by a pool of America's resources—that is, America's needs through a great centralized credit organization, with extensive powers of coordination. This may sound like an ideal plan stated in sweeping terms, but I think its details can be worked out in practical, concrete form.

There seems to be no existing machinery adequate to do this. Therefore a special instrumentality must be set up along lines recently suggested in behalf of American bankers' groups, probably in the form of a great credit corporation with capital enough to handle the transactions of the size that could be involved. That is, transactions representing not merely the business of individual concerns but the combined requirements of nations.

A necessary step would seem to be that surveys be made of the commodity needs of the nations of Europe—that is, the types of foodstuffs, copper, steel, cotton, wheat and other supplies would be required for Belgium and also for the other needy countries.

The supplies available in America are great, but they are not so great as to be unlimited and unbalanced demands.

"In addition to rationing and allocation of commodities there is the question of establishing adequate credits in this country to be considered. The necessary credits will be great, so that the banks will be called upon to invest the public's whole country in the form of bonds or debentures.

"Because of the deferred maturities of these debentures the banks should not be expected to absorb them. There will have to be an appeal to the general public both in the ground of a safe and lucrative investment and in the sake of humanity. These are the immediate aspects of the matter, but back of it all we must not forget that it will be in the last analysis, a means of conserving and maintaining the business prosperity and integrity of the whole nation in its loaning and lending to protect our own people from unsound investments in European securities."

The security behind these debentures should make them almost equal to Government bonds in the point of safety, but we must not overlook the fact also that America must respond to the sale of these debentures in a spirit of humanity. Business and humanity are two great social forces which must work together in the present problem.

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U. S. WILL BUILD 'GREATEST LINERS'

1,000 Foot Boats, Carrying 3,000 Passengers, Will Cross in Four Days.

SPECIAL HARBOR ON L. I.

Sea Walls and Great Terminal at Fort Pond Bay Will Be Constructed.

WASHINGTON, July 24.—Two gigantic liners larger than any ever built after four days to be built on the Atlantic in four days to be built by the Shipping Board. They will be 1,000 feet long and of thirty knots speed and will be equipped for use as commerce destroyers in the event of war.

An announcement was made today by the board that plans for the ships had been completed and that work on them would be started in the near future. It is proposed to provide a special terminal at Fort Pond Bay, L. I., and it may be that two similar liners will be constructed later.

The ships, which will be built under contract with the Navy Department, will be fifty feet longer than the famous Leviathan, now the largest ship afloat, and will have gross tonnage of 55,000. Their draft will be 35 feet, depth 74 feet, beam 102 feet and accommodations will be provided for 3,000 passengers, 1,000 officers and 2,000 steerage passengers.

The crew will number 1,000 officers and men and the ships will be of the oil burning type with a cruising radius of 7,000 miles, which will enable them to complete a round trip on the Atlantic without loading fuel over seas. They will be driven by four propellers on which will be mounted the strength of 110,000 horsepower.

In order that the vessels may be converted into commerce destroyers in time of war, gun emplacements will be built on the decks and the afterdeck will be converted with a view of transforming the ship into a floating landing and launching platform.

Construction of a terminal at Fort Pond Bay, Montauk Point, will begin early next month, the announcement said. A great natural depth harbor was provided there and in addition the location was chosen for the voyage from England to New York, the distance being 3,575 miles as compared with 2,926 miles from New York city.

Another advantage in using Fort Pond Bay, the announcement said, would be the reliefing of congestion in New York Harbor.

The plan provides for double tracking of the present railroad from New York to New Haven, the distance being 2,375 miles.

Plans for the great American liners were formulated at a meeting of naval constructors and private builders, and Captain Hurley has been recommended to Secretary Baker to act as technical supervisor of the project.

Next is the Leviathan, the largest ship now afloat is the Imperator of 31,659 gross tons, which is now used as an American transport and which ultimately will be turned over to Great Britain. Her speed is only about 23 knots. The largest British liner afloat is the New Britannia of 48,155 gross tons.

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